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*'THE MUSICAL PILGRIM'*

*Edited by Dr. Arthur Somervell*

Mendelssohn

*by* Cyril Winn

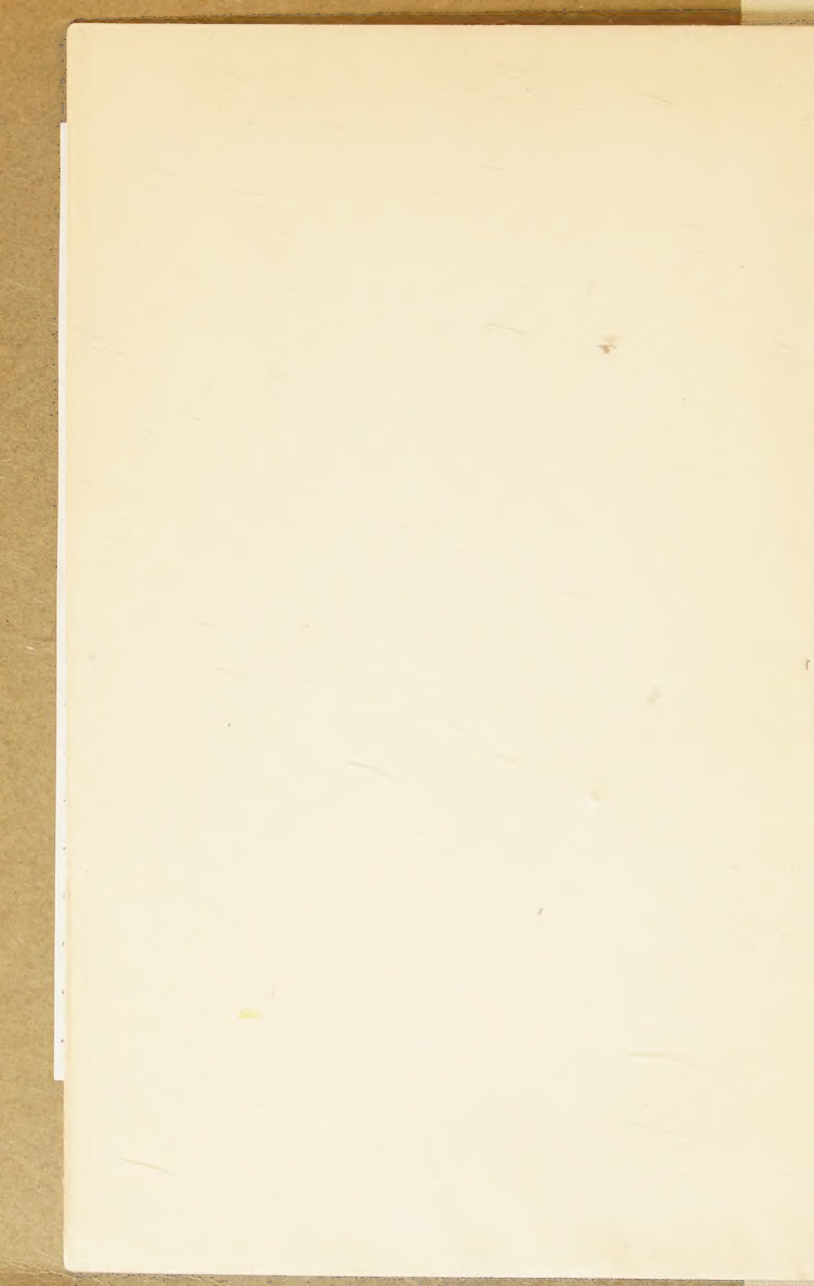




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‘*THE MUSICAL PILGRIM*’

*General Editor*

*Dr. Arthur Somervell*

# MENDELSSOHN

BY

CYRIL WINN



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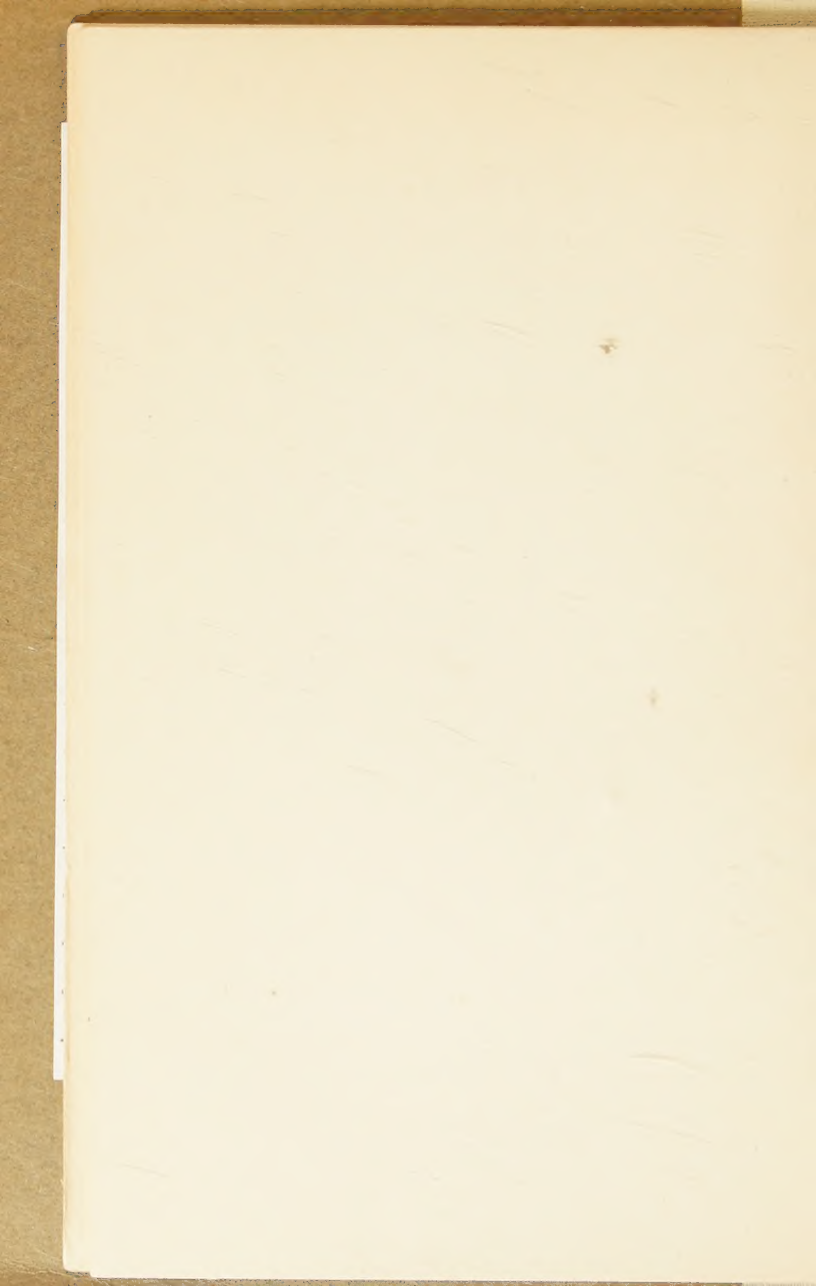
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## INTRODUCTORY

### *'Midsummer-Night's Dream' Music*

It was as a youth of seventeen that Mendelssohn wrote the overture to this finely flavoured work, and in so doing laid the foundations of his subsequent success.

Early in the year 1826 he became acquainted with this Comedy while reading with his sisters Shakespeare in German for the first time, and he was so impressed by its charm that he lost no time in writing a musical counterpart to it.

The overture received its first public performance at Stettin in February 1827, whither the composer went from his home in Berlin to conduct it. Writing of it after an interval of fifty years, Sir George Macfarren expressed the view that no one piece of music contained so many points of harmony and orchestration that had never been written before as did this overture, and they had none of them the air of experiment, but seemed all to have been written with certainty of their success. This opinion, one may believe with reason, would be cordially endorsed by musicians of to-day. It was performed in London at the Argyll Rooms in 1829, but after the concert the score was left in a hackney coach by Attwood and lost. Mendelssohn, however, quickly made another, and on comparing it with the parts of the original when found, no variations could be detected.

For practical purposes he arranged it for pianoforte duet, and so brought it within the scope of amateur musicians to play and enjoy in their own homes.

It was not until 1843, or sixteen years later, that the incidental music was completed, and a first performance of the whole work given at Potsdam under royal patronage. In the next year he conducted it at a Philharmonic concert in London, and from that day to this it has always proved a great attraction to English audiences.

### *Violin Concerto in E minor*

This was the only work of the kind that Mendelssohn wrote. It was completed in the summer of 1844 while he was taking a holiday with his wife and children in the country, but 'without piano' as he asserts in one of his letters. It was first performed at Leipzig in March 1845, but, having recently been uneasy about his health and yielding to doctor's orders, he resolved to remain at Frankfort and forgo the pleasure of hearing the first performance. It was given again, however, later in the same year at the same centre, under his direction.

### *'The Hebrides' Overture*

In the spring of 1829 Mendelssohn paid his first visit to these islands, and in the course of an extensive tour visited the Hebrides, the scenery of which so thrilled him that he was inspired to write his overture bearing their name. But it was at Rome in the course of the following year that he began serious work on it, and finally completed it before the year was out. It made its first appearance at a Philharmonic concert in London in the May of 1832, and he presented a manuscript score of the overture to the Society 'as a mark of his deep gratitude for the kindness shewn him' during

his second visit to the country. The published edition, however, is in some respects different, as the original version was revised by him a few weeks after its London performance. Like the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* music, it has been skilfully arranged for pianoforte duet, and recorded for use on the gramophone.

*Prelude and Fugue in E minor (Piano)*

Mendelssohn's compositions for piano alone are few considering his mastery of the instrument, but all of them are deftly contrived, and bear the usual marks of scrupulous attention to detail.

The Preludes and Fugues for piano were mostly written during the winter of 1837, that is, in the year previous to his marriage.

In them one cannot fail to see the influence of Bach, whose works he so sincerely admired and strove to commend both by precept and practice to the notice of the music-loving public of this country.

A Duo-Art Piano roll, published by the Aeolian Company, gives a very adequate reproduction of this work.



## 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' Music

THE work is scored for flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, each with divided parts, with horns, trumpets in E and ophicleides or bass trumpets, and timpani. There is the usual arrangement of strings, except that the violins are divided into four sections and are often found in quartet.

The scheme of the overture is as follows: A first subject with two main ideas grouped round the Tonic as tonal centre: (A) the Fairy theme in E minor followed by (B), a festive one in E major. The second subject also contains two ideas, but centres in the key of the dominant; these are (A), The lovers' theme, and (B), one which may be connected with Bottom and his companions. After the exposition of these themes the overture follows the normal course of Sonata form, with its Development, Recapitulation, and a Coda in conclusion. *The Introduction* consists of four softly sustained chords in E major given out by the woodwind, balanced by a two-bar chord in E minor played on the strings; this is immediately followed by the first part of the first subject proper, announced very softly and *staccato* by the violins *divisi*.

I A.

*Allegro di molto.*



## ‘Midsummer-Night’s Dream’ Music 9

This is balanced by an eight-bar sentence, to which the violas, playing *pizzicato*, are added as part of the accompaniment.



*s* is now repeated, but, before it is succeeded again by *t*, a sustained chord is heard from the woodwind. These are then repeated with the punctuating chord as before, and lead up to the second part of the first subject in E major, which, by virtue of its volume and sonority, provides a forceful contrast to the gossamer-like character of its predecessor. It is played on the strings with woodwind and brass supporting it. Towards its close a downward scalewise passage (*z*) is announced by flutes and oboes (*ff*), then by clarinets, bassoons, and brass in quick succession with an accompaniment on the strings in ♩ ♪ ♪ rhythm.

1 B. *x*





The first subject having been given out in its entirety a bridge passage follows composed of 1 (B) x in B minor, then in C sharp minor, and again in E major, after which the first part of the second subject is given out on the clarinets, and continued softly on the violins.



The Section *o* is then repeated twice, followed by a short trumpet-like call from the woodwind and brass. Then with a suggestion of *o* and another jubilant call, the music gradually works up to a climax which introduces the second part of this subject, a sprightly theme brimful of good humour. It is announced by the violins to the dronelike accompaniment of the rest of the orchestra. The instrumental counterpart

## ‘Midsummer-Night’s Dream’ Music 11

of Bottom’s braying in bars 3 and 4, &c., is neat and amusing.

2 B.



A short horn call, strongly reminiscent of  $\gamma$  in 1 B, brings us back once more to  $\alpha$  in the same example, but this time in the key of B major. After this, a robust *arpeggio* played in unison by the whole orchestra takes us to the development section proper.

This opens with the  $s$  section of 1 A, now transposed into B minor, played on the violins. It is now taken up by the other strings in turn. It then reappears on the violins in F sharp minor, being subsequently heard on the other strings in turn as before. For some bars the little trumpet call is heard busily going on in the ranks of the woodwind and brass, while  $s$  of 1 A is first shared by the first and second violins alternately, and then given exclusively to the former.

The rest of the orchestra is now engaged in playing sustained chords, while the same subject is repeated by violas and 'cellos in unison. The music now dies down to a *pianissimo*, in the course of which the strings are divided into two sections; one playing *tremolo* in unison, the other *pizzicato* down the scale, also in unison. Presently all the strings are playing *tremolo*, the violins descending the scale of G sharp minor and

the rest accompanying. In the middle of this passage, however, flutes, clarinets, and bassoons are heard ascending the same scale. Presently, after a quietly sustained phrase or two the recapitulation begins, and the original introduction reappears as a prelude to 1 A, but this time with occasional comments from the woodwind. This is repeated in its entirety, but soon afterwards modulates into C major, then back again to E major, on which 2 A reappears in the flute part, while free use is made of a descending scale in the accompaniment. It is then continued on the strings, in the same manner as on its first appearance. Indeed this section throughout is practically a reproduction of the corresponding section of the second subject 2 A and B except that it is now in the key of E major instead of B. At its conclusion the descending scale from 1 B (2) is heard, given out by woodwind and brass consecutively. Then the leading note is flattened and a modulation to F sharp minor is thus effected. Meanwhile the music is gradually working up to another sonorous climax, in the course of which the first five notes of section *p* in 2 A are especially conspicuous. At last the climax is reached with the reannouncement of 1 B, but this time denuded of its descending scale, a series of E major chords taking its place. No sooner has the last of these resounding chords been played than 1 A is heard pattering in on the violins introducing the Coda. Thus in a moment, pianissimo succeeds to fortissimo, and major to minor. It is worth while noting here the variety of Mendelssohn's accompaniments to a single theme, even where the harmonies are substantially the same. Here, it will be observed, for instance, that the accompaniment is more slender than



it is in the corresponding passage at the opening of the overture. Again, at the entry of the recapitulatory section, it is accompanied by intermittent comment from the woodwind and occasional notes of the kettle-drum. Here, however, the orchestral comment is quite different. At the close of the passage the descending scale is heard again in the upper woodwind, with clarinet, bassoon, and horn accompaniment. Then after a quiet four-bar phrase, the first section of I B is announced by the violins, first in its original rhythm with an altered melodic curve, and then with its rhythm slightly altered. The music then dies away to nothing, closing with the same chords with which it began.

Within the short compass of this overture there is sufficient to prove Mendelssohn’s complete mastery of orchestral technique. In it there are many occasions on which the whole orchestra is employed at once, but it is playing *piano* quite as often as *fortissimo* on these occasions. There are many effective contrasts also in his use of the strings and wind especially in those passages where the wind playing *ff* is followed immediately by the strings *pp*. It should be noted too that wherever the light and fantastic first subject I A appears the violins are divided into four parts. However monotonous and banal some of his vocal and piano compositions may be, his works for the orchestra are invariably full of interesting experiments and arresting combinations. If it is possible to sum up his achievements in this sphere of composition, ‘delicacy’ and ‘restraint’ are the two qualities which strike the listener most cogently. This is certainly the case with the overture under consideration, for it is of this that

Sir George Grove spoke when he asserted that 'it brought the fairies in to the orchestra, and fixed them there'.

### *The Nocturne*

This is the music of night and of sleep, for Demetrius and Hermia are peacefully sleeping. The melody is given to the horns and accompanied by the bassoons.

1. *Con moto tranquillo.*



It is then repeated with a horn pedal on the bottom E, and followed by a bridge passage in the same rhythm, which in its turn leads into 1 again, strings being added to the original accompaniment. After a full close, the music grows more impassioned (*crescendo ed agitato*) and the first two bars of 1, with slightly altered intervals, are heard on the violins against quaver triplets on the rest of the strings. A new sentence, played by the clarinets, now makes its appearance over the quaver triplets.



The first two bars of 1, with the same alterations as before, are now heard again on the violins, and this is followed by 2 under the same circumstances as before. The first two bars of 1 are now used to work the music up to a climax, the violins and 'cellos playing in octaves,

## 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' Music 15

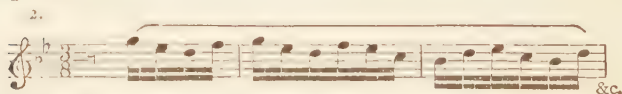
and with a sudden *pianissimo* the flutes play 2 to the slender accompaniment of clarinets and violins, and subsequently of clarinets alone. 2 *b* is then repeated twice, and is soon used as a decoration to 1 *a*, which, after two 'false starts', reappears in full in the horn part, accompanied by quaver triplets on the strings, and versions of 1 *b* on the flutes and clarinets. It is then repeated, brought to a climax, with the aid of the oboes playing in octave above, and then down again to *piano*. Then follows a passage made up of various bars of 1, especially bars 3, 4, and 5, which provides the opportunity for another quickly reached climax. The music then dies away to *pianissimo*, and the opening bars of 1 are just audible from the horns in the midst of the quivering of the strings and the bird-like call of the flutes playing 2 *b*. Meanwhile all the instruments have joined forces and soon work up to a very effective climax, the violins leaving it by a downward scalewise passage, and the rest of the orchestra gradually fading away. Just before the tonic chord is reached, the first three bars of 1 are sounded forth again on the horns with clarinet accompaniment and a horn pedal. These are repeated, and then the action of the play changes once more the character of the music, for the bower opens again to present to view Titania and Bottom with the elves; Oberon is behind, but unseen. Dancing semiquaver triplets are now given to the flutes, while violins and clarinets sustain an E pedal in three octaves. Presently soft trumpet-like chords are shared by these instruments, while the rest of the woodwind holds the chord of E major. After six *pizzicato* chords, the music closes as peacefully as it began.

## The Scherzo

The Scherzo, one of the most piquant he ever wrote—and all his Scherzos were exquisitely fashioned, opens with the following subject :



played by flutes with clarinet and bassoon accompaniment. At the fifth bar it gives place to a little phrase in imitation of the first bar, which appears in the clarinet part. The subject then reappears in the key of D minor, played by the oboes, with flutes, bassoons, and horns in attendance, which is followed by a repetition of the little phrase given this time to the bassoons. An ascending passage in thirds on the clarinets takes us back to the opening again, and now more of the orchestra comes into play. 1 is allotted to the violins, accompanied by full woodwind and strings, and 1 *a* is then developed for some bars on the violins, with intermittent comments from various members of the woodwind, while the violas and 'cellos fill in the harmonies. A flute *arpeggio* introduces a buoyant sentence which is so characteristic that it must be quoted here :



It is given to the first violins, while the clarinet and bassoons provide a subtle accompaniment. 'This is repeated on the same instruments in octaves with a

slightly fuller accompaniment. A humorous little phrase now makes its appearance:




and is heard three or four times consecutively on the woodwind against a ' bees' wedding-like ' accompaniment on the strings. These immediately strike up a new melody, all the more effective for being played *staccato e pianissimo*, and the woodwind plays in broken chords :



This is repeated with the same concomitants, and then the phrase 4 *b* is developed for a few bars in the same semiquaver rhythm, until an upward rushing passage which grows softer and softer towards its climax, reintroduces 1 *a* and *b* and its repetition in D minor. Immediately after this an imitation of 1 *a* is heard murmuring in the 'cello and bass parts and gradually growing in volume until the climax is reached on the chord of D major; meanwhile the woodwind is sustaining chords and also making a crescendo to *ff*, after which a version of 2 threads its way from flute to clarinet and then from violin to viola. The previous section is now repeated, with a change of key, it is true, but otherwise substantially the same, leading into repetitions of 2, which as before is tossed from one instrument to another. 1 *a* is then developed somewhat for a few bars, in the course of which there are one or two good examples of 'imitation', the strings



at this point having most of the fun. Next, while the woodwind sustains as before, the first bar only of 1 *a* is most prominent on the first violins for some bars ; then the initial quaver gives place to a quaver rest, and the music dies away to *pianissimo*, which is the signal for the reappearance of 4 *a* and *b* on violins and violas in E flat with the same kind of woodwind accompaniment as before. This modulates through various closely related keys, until presently the second and third bars of 4 *a* are heard playing 'hide-and-seek' with each other, woodwind alternating with strings. The rhythm of 1 *a* is now given out *pp* on the timpani, and after one period a version of 1 *a* is heard prancing down on the clarinets through a horn 'pedal'. The same rhythm is then transferred to the bass strings, while 4 *a* is inverted and given to the violins. The section is then repeated with slight variations and a slightly fuller accompaniment. At its close the 1 *a* rhythm persists in the timpani part, over which the strings come whirling down the scale by means of a  shaped phrase in semiquavers, while higher still on the flute is heard another phrase, which in its rhythm is reminiscent of 3. A chromatic passage then steals up the strings, each instrument having 2 bars of it in semiquavers, until, at its climax, 1 *a* and *b* make their reappearance, but this time the first violins, playing *tremolo*, are added to the accompaniment. This is repeated in C minor and followed by several repetitions of 3 with its drone-like accompaniment on the first violins and violas ; meanwhile the rhythm of 1 *a* is heard busily going on the bass strings. Then the descending passage (2), on this occasion attended by the rest of the strings, leads on to another appear-

## 'Midsummer-Night's Dream' Music 19

ance of 4 and subsequent repetitions of bars 6 and 4 played on the strings with woodwind accompaniment. When this period comes to an end, the phrase from bar 4 is still heard on the strings in the 'give-and-take' manner so characteristic of Mendelssohn. This, after modulating a little, leads into two further repetitions of the first two bars of 4 *a*, with light woodwind playing around it. The flutes now have a long, *staccato*, semi-quaver passage in the course of which bar 2 of 4 inverted is frequently prominent; the rest of the orchestra is, for the most part, engaged in playing *staccato* quavers *sempre pianissimo*, until at last the flutes are left playing alone a soaring passage which reintroduces for the last time 1 *a*. This is faintly echoed by the clarinets, and with a last murmur of the now familiar 1 *a* rhythm in the chord of G minor, and two rapid unison quavers, one of the most exquisitely subtle works ever written comes to a close.

### *The Intermezzo*

This section, played while Hermia seeks Lysander and loses herself in the wood, describes the scene very vividly. It opens with a sentence, the alternate phrases of which are given to oboes and first violins, and flutes and clarinets respectively, the rest of the strings playing *tremolo*.



After this 1 *a* is repeated with the following changes; the alternate phrases are now played vice versa, a horn

pedal is introduced, the string harmonies are slightly more elaborate, and a counter melodic phrase is heard on the bassoons. Instead of continuing to the end, however, it modulates by means of a little phrase,



which is balanced by



into E minor, around which it hovers for some bars, the two phrases being shared out between the same combinations as before, after a two bars' bridge passage for second violins and violas, a new phrase appears, of which much use is made in the succeeding bars.



The accompaniment here is very light, consisting mainly of second violins and violas (*tremolo*), with very effective *pizzicato* 'first beats' on 'cellos and basses. Repeatedly the phrase slightly alters its shape and rhythm, and in this form continues to be played 'in patches' by first violins, and various members of the woodwind group. Then a variation of 2 makes frequent appearances in the course of the next few bars, the phrase being distributed among the parts as before. This ultimately leads into a reannouncement of 1 in full, but this time the 'cellos combine with the bassoons in playing the counter melody, and the viola part is

doubled. At its close, this melody is heard descending chromatically on oboes, bassoons, and 'cellos, while violins and the rest of the woodwind improvise versions of 2. The improvisations persist for some bars after the melody has ceased, and finally culminate in a unison octave on A. A slight variation of the counter melody is now heard on 'cellos, basses, and bassoons against the unisonous A, but there is a speedy resumption of the three-quaver phrases in the woodwind and first violin parts. Again the counter melody is heard in the same quarter as before, followed in the same way by the three-quaver phrases until the music dies away to a gently rising murmur of violins and clarinets, which is carried still higher by the flutes, and then down again by the two former instruments. Then after a drowsy phrase from the 'cellos, Quince, Snug, Bottom, and the rest suddenly appear and the whole character of the music changes, the 'cellos forming a tenor pedal, and the bassoons gaily sounding forth a rustic tune.



Mendelssohn is so pleased with it that he repeats it on the same instruments, with an oboe pedal and *pizzicato* string accompaniment. Then follow a few bars in imitation of it, the extreme parts making its contrary motion, after which 5 *a* twice reappears; it is now abbreviated by one bar and played thus by all the woodwind except the flutes. It is then further curtailed, and for two bars its first four semiquavers only are heard. Once more 5 *a* reappears, and this is the signal for the Intermezzo to conclude.

## *The Violin Concerto in E Minor—Allegro*

WITH only a brief introduction of a bar and a half the solo instrument commences the principal subject, accompanied by broken chords, the strings and woodwind sustaining. After this it is repeated with further woodwind accompaniment.



At its close a phrase from the end of it is developed somewhat on the solo violin, which soon breaks into triplets, punctuated by *staccato* chords in the woodwind. Presently the interest of the accompaniment quickens, and a syncopated passage working against the triplets brings us to a chord of the diminished seventh to which Mendelssohn is very partial. This is echoed in an *arpeggio* by the violin, and the device is repeated, but then the principal subject is reannounced with full accompaniment. At its conclusion a phrase from *I b* is taken up by the strings and 'answered' by the rest of the orchestra. A florid tune is now heard for four bars in the upper register, and is then transferred to the lower. This brings us to the Transition proper, which in this case is remarkable both for its distinguished character and length. The normal Transition is composed of some fragment or fragments of the first or second subjects and is not protracted to any extent.



Here it persists for no less than sixty bars—in contrast with Schubert's 'Unfinished', where it is of four bars' duration only.

2.



This melody is continued for a few bars more, and then introduces us to the Development Section with 1 *a* transposed into the relative major for the solo part. Its last six notes are now detached from their context and treated sequentially for a few bars, first by violins and oboes in unison, then by the former alone. While this is in progress the solo player has some very exacting work to negotiate which continues for some time after the short sequential passage has come to an end. After this the strings accompany *pizzicato*, and the six-note figure is heard twice from the flutes and oboes in unison. For a brief space a  $\bullet \circ \bullet$  rhythm becomes conspicuous in the clarinets and violins, which soon, however, gives place to the opening phrase of 1 *a* sounded twice in quick succession by flutes and oboes and again later by the same instruments. At this point the same is heard on the solo violin working up to a climax accompanied by the full orchestra. The music then dies down and the transition passage already referred to (2) reappears, this time in A minor with woodwind accompaniment; it is repeated for a few bars by flutes and violins, and then for several bars the solo player executes an extemporization on it, punctuated frequently by snatches of the first section of 1 *a* from the other instruments in turn. At last it is transferred to the solo part, accompanied very softly by broken chords on the strings. A series of descending phrases, derived from the third and fourth notes of 1 *a*, bring us to a pianissimo chord of the dominant seventh, which gradually grows in volume, as the opening phrase of 1 *a*, with its trumpet-like call, soars higher and higher, until it brings us to the very edge of the cadenza, which forms the link between the

development and the recapitulatory sections. In this instance 1 *a* is given to the flutes, oboes, and first violins, while the principal violin is engaged in *arpeggio* work. To the second violins and violas broken chords are given, and the rest of the woodwind enters in sections. Then 2 reappears, but in very different surroundings; instead of the soft soothing character it first assumed we have something sonorous, turgid, and deeply moving. The theme is announced by flutes, oboes, and violins, and accompanied by the rest of the orchestra, the solo instrument alone being silent.

Then follows an orchestral device very typical of the composer; the *ff* passages come suddenly to an end, out of its volume steals forth an extemporization of the opening bar of the same theme played by the soloist and accompanied by a bass string pedal and divided clarinets; all die away to pianissimo and leave the violin a three-bar bridge passage which leads into the recapitulation of 3 in the key of E major. It is instructive to compare the accompaniment here with that which was employed at its first entry.

In this case oboes are added, and after eight bars the horns. As before the balancing sentence is heard, and at its close the opening bars of 3 on the woodwind. Then after a brief reposeful passage for the strings, the key changes to E minor, and the solo instrument re-echoes the opening phrase of the same subject in that key. The music now suddenly quickens, and the violin sets out on another rapid adventure, with string accompaniment throughout. Comments from the woodwind are audible, however, during its course. First clarinets and bassoons, then oboes and clarinets, the subject (1) being the same in each case, followed by

flutes and oboes. The solo instrument now takes up the first phrase of subject, which is heard soaring upwards in spite of the fullness of the accompaniment. The Transition passage now reappears, but slightly altered and on this occasion by oboes. From this point the music quickens to *piu presto*, and while the solo player is conspicuous in a series of scale passages, other instruments are interpolating with an eight-note figure based on the opening phrase of the Transition theme. At the close of the series *a* is heard from the first violins and the phrase is carried on and taken up to E *in alt.* Then a downward passage taken from 2 brings us to the cadence and the end of the movement.

### *Andante*

This movement provides an effective contrast to the one preceding, both in form and matter. First, it is a movement of Episode, with a principal theme in the tonic key, a theme of contrast in another key, and a return to the first theme followed by a coda. Secondly, its themes are of a very different character from those in the first movement, and, moreover, the accompaniment is much lighter. Eight bars of introductory matter precede the announcement of the principal theme on the solo instrument, which is accompanied solely by the strings.



Its opening phrase is then repeated and, modulating for a moment into the minor, resumes its original key. The same phrase is now heard commencing in the minor. Then, after a brief descending passage, 4 *b* is taken up again an octave higher by the solo player. Presently suggestions from this sentence are heard from the inner string parts, and a short transition period brings us to the theme of contrast.



This is given to the first violins, doubled by the first oboe, and played by the 'cellos an octave lower, with other woodwind and string accompaniment. It is then taken up by the principal violin, supported by the rest of the violins and double bass. Then follows a series of imitative phrases based on this theme, which is then developed in the solo part, with a slender string accompaniment as before. Now comes an admirable example of the balancing of phrases, the value of which is greatly enhanced by a deft handling of the orchestra.

The phrase at 5 *a*, played by violins and clarinets, is answered by 5 *b*, played by the solo violin. Then 5 *c*, played by the same instrument is answered by 5 *d*, from flutes, oboes, and violins. 'This is repeated, *f* being followed by *pp*. Then with further dialogue between oboes and violins, and a shimmering passage of demisemiquavers for the principal violin, the main theme (4) is reintroduced on that instrument. At the second bar of its progress, it appears for one bar in the flute part inverted, and the upward phrase thus created is taken up by flutes, clarinets, and bassoons in turn.

Meanwhile the main theme pursues the even tenor of its way accompanied by broken chords of demisemi-quavers on the other strings. As before, snatches from this theme now appear in the inner string parts, and a gently flowing passage given to the soloist brings the movement to an end. Following immediately upon this comes an *allegro* bridge passage, the melody of which is distinctly reminiscent of the closing phrase of I and centres around the dominant of the key of E. Then, after a few introductory chords, the principal violin gives out the first subject, accompanied by flutes and *pizzicato* strings.



At the second bar of the subject it is heard in imitation on the first clarinet. This is repeated under the same conditions as before, and the solo instrument presently breaks away into a series of scale passages, in the midst of which there are frequent allusions to the opening bar of the principal subject, and comments on the same subject from various instruments of the orchestra. The whole of this passage, in fact, is another eloquent example of the composer's delicacy and restraint in scoring for orchestra, while towards its close there is an interesting 'conversation' between flutes and bassoons.

This leads into the second subject, the second part



of which (8 *b*) is strongly reminiscent of (7 *a*)—in its rhythmic pattern, at any rate, and is therefore less of a contrast to the principal subject than is usually the case in a Sonata form scheme.



Its general effect, however, owing to the particular arrangement of the score, is that of triumph and jubilation, whereas vivacity and delicacy were the outstanding features of the first subject. Here again the phrase balancing should be noted, for this subject provides an excellent specimen of balance by repartee, i. e. the answering phrase is a contrast both in rhythm and melodic outline. This can easily be seen by comparing 8 *a* with 8 *b*. It is first given out on strings and woodwind, and then reappears in the solo part, which hitherto has been silent, with light string accompaniment. Presently, in the course of four consecutive bars, the first four notes of 8 *b* are heard in the inner string parts. With a sweeping upward scale the solo violin breaks off into a sprightly run, while 8 *a* is softly repeated on various instruments ; oboes, flutes, oboes again, violins, flutes and oboes together, and finally violins again, each in turn taking a part of it. At last the rushing semi-quavers have run their course, and the principal subject (7) is reannounced by the solo player. This introduces us to the development section of the movement. After this the thematic interest is transferred to the inner

string parts, the score of which is alive with reminiscences of 7 *a*, while the solo violin has a counter subject which recurs later in inverted position, i. e. below the subject, and provides a genuine contrast. Of the rest of the accompanying instruments, clarinets and bassoons are most frequently engaged. Variations of 7 *a* now appear in the solo part and a version of 9 is played by violins, violas, and 'cellos in unison, intermittent phrases from the woodwind continuing throughout. Then, after a rapid bridge passage for the principal violin, 7 in its original form is given to the same instrument with a version of 9 in attendance as before; but fuller use is now made of the woodwind. This signalizes the opening of the recapitulatory section. Another scalewise passage for the solo player reintroduces the second subject (8), and once more the orchestral balance should be noticed. The first phrase is given out with full orchestral accompaniment, and then the solo part has the second phrase, to be played softly and lightly with very slender accompaniment; this device is then repeated, and for a few bars the four-note descending passage from 8 *b* is taken out of its context and used as a separate phrase by the solo violin, to which is next allotted a brief but rapid passage of scales and *arpeggi*. Meanwhile 8 *a* is kept busily going, first on flutes and clarinets, then on the violins, next on the oboes with violins in imitation, then on the flutes and oboes together, until finally it disappears among the lower reaches of the strings. A bar or two for full orchestra, the main feature of which is the use of the first three notes of 8 *a* leaping down in *arpeggio* sequence, and a series of trills for the solo violin carry us on to the Coda, at the commencement of which 7 *a*

is heard on the flutes for the last time. Very soon after this 8 *a* reappears in various colours ; on strings, flutes, and bassoons together, and later alternately. The end is now in sight and the solo part is still clearly heard above the rest of the orchestra, owing to the skill with which the score is arranged. The concluding bars are of a merely conventional character, with alternating tonic and dominant chords, but the upward swerve of the solo violin in the last bar but two is striking and original in its conception.

### *' The Hebrides ' Overture*

It is on record that Mendelssohn when travelling in Scotland sent a letter home to his parents from Fingal's Cave, with the following theme at the head of it :



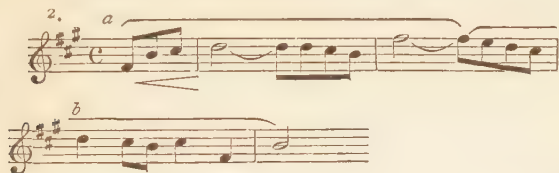
to show, as he put it 'how extraordinarily the place affected me'. This theme he later on developed into this beautiful overture known as 'Die Hebriden'. It is essentially 'Programme' music, and descriptive of the wildness and grandeur of the sea in the neighbourhood of the Hebrides. The scheme of the work is that of ordinary sonata form, but, as is the case in all Mendelssohn's orchestral works, definite cadence-points, and similar boundary lines between the important divisions of a movement are not so clearly defined as they are in the works of earlier composers, with the result that unity rather than diversity, and continuity rather than dichotomy are among the conspicuous features of these works.

The overture opens with the principal subject on bassoons, violas and 'cellos with a violin 'pedal'. It is a restless, busy little phrase, suggestive of more vigorous movement to come on the face of those storm-tossed waters.



As it continues its swerving course, the rest of the woodwind gathers round it and it is quickly transferred to the violins, while the violas and 'cellos, which it has forsaken, break away into semiquaver rhythm, as if the waters were suddenly stirred into more restless movement. Against this the horns sustain a long F sharp, suggesting, perhaps, the strength and permanence of the rocks around which the waters surge; the roll of the drum, too, may indicate the menace of a distant but approaching storm. After 8 *b* has been announced, the woodwind, which, except for two chords on the bassoons, has been silent during the horn 'pedal', joins in again to enforce a cadence. 8 *b* is now repeated and works up to a *ff* climax, but immediately dies away to *pp*, as though the wind had died down as suddenly as it had burst into fury. A sound as of gently rustling leaves takes its place, and now the transition passage begins with a melody (on flutes, oboes, and bassoons) which is far more akin to the second subject than to the first. In the works of earlier composers, however, it is generally to be observed that the transition is

formed of an expansion of the idea of the first subject. But in this case, though this subject does undoubtedly appear in the viola and 'cello parts, the dominating tune has no resemblance to it.



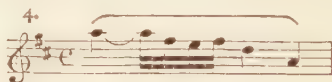
This is repeated, but now by oboe and bassoon in unison, in the middle of which the figure from 1 in the accompaniment gives place to a succession of triplets. The bar (2 b) is now taken out of its context and appears as a separate figure, first on violins, then on flutes, oboes, and violas, and again on the violins. In the course of these 'exchanges', two effective uses of climax should be noted, both working up from *pp* to *ff* and back again to *pp* within a very short space. The music now becomes placid, broken only by the soft shimmering of the violins and violas, and a quiet *arpeggio* passage for clarinets and bassoons combined with a soft heralding of trumpets introduces the second subject



in the relative major, given out by 'cellos, bassoons, and clarinets, and accompanied by the strings in a semi-

quaver rhythm with intermittent comments from the flutes. A *pp* chord for horns now reintroduces the same subject, but here it is given to the violins alone and the semiquaver accompaniment is more slender than before. At its close a short phrase, suggestive of 3 *b* (with the interval of the fourth filled in) and very typical of Mendelssohn, is heard and repeated, when, suddenly, the first subject reappears, first on the flutes, then on other woodwind instruments, the rest of the orchestra working up to a climax.

For several bars the music sustains its rushing and boisterous character, and 1 reappears in various rhythms. First as



Then as



which sound forth amid the clamour of the whole orchestra, the brass and woodwind playing *ff* chords, and the strings rushing hither and thither with tempestuous speed. At the close of this turgid paragraph, a fanfare on horns and trumpets preludes the reappearance of the first subject played by the violas, punctuated by sonorous calls from brass and woodwind combined. It is accompanied by *tremolo* violins, and modulates freely into various keys. After this comes a succession of answering phrases (*con forza*), between horns, trumpets, and the rest of the wind section, the violins forming



a restless background. A slightly altered version of 3, but much curtailed, now appears in the 'cello and subsequently in the violin part. This is immediately followed by a reminiscence of 1 in yet another rhythm on the violins, and as speedily by 2 *b*, reannounced on the flutes, and accompanied by a passage of swerving triplets on the violas and 'cellos. Against the same kind of accompaniment, another version of 1 *a* is heard :



and at its close 2 *b* again on the violins. A downward scale introduces us to some very skilful feats of 'balancing' between the strings and woodwind, the material being taken from the first subject again. Here it takes a sprightly character, but at first it is very subdued ; standing out prominently from the *staccato* chords and in marked contrast to them is a long sustained note given to the oboes, thus forming a pedal. As the music grows in volume and intensity, horns, trumpets, and trombones are added, and the imitative pattern presently disappears, though the same subject persists in the violin parts. The atmosphere now grows wild and tempestuous, as if fierce breakers were hurling themselves against impregnable rocks, the former represented by the bass strings, and the latter by the rest of the orchestra. After the climax has been reached by means of an upward chromatic scale, the music suddenly dies away, and, amid the gentle rustle of the violins the recapitulatory section commences, the violas and 'cellos giving out the first part of the subject, which is re-

echoed by clarinets, horns, and trumpets playing softly together ; the violins then take up the second part, but enlarge it by adding an octave phrase for another four bars. A short bridge passage brings us to the recapitulation of the second subject, given out by the clarinet ; it is accompanied by sustained chords on the strings, and is extended in the same way as it was on its first appearance. The *pp* horn call, which breaks in towards its close, comes with very happy effect.

After this, without pause, the music quickens and the coda begins. Once more the violins break into rapid semiquavers and combine with the other instruments to produce another climax, but just when this is reached clarinets, oboes, and bassoons are silent for two bars, while the first subject is given out again by the bass strings to the accompaniment of a swirling violin passage. After the two bars, full woodwind and brass sustain a *ff* chord for two bars, and then woodwind alone. The subject now reappears on the second violins and violas, later doubled by horns and trumpets, the full orchestra accompanying for three bars. Meanwhile the first violins are pursuing their headlong course. At the end of the third bar, however, the strings are left to themselves and parts of the same subject are heard from 'cellos and basses. Presently all the strings are moving rapidly against a background of more slowly moving brass and woodwind, which is rendered all the more effective by the fact that the strings form one unison and the wind another. Soon the various instruments break off into a harmony of *pizzicato* chords, bound together by a *pp* sustained note on the trumpet. At the cadence the first subject is sounded quietly by the clarinets and succeeded by a *ff*

chord from the rest of the orchestra ; this is repeated, and then, as it dies away, the first few notes of 3 *a* are given out by the flutes and three *pp pizzicato* chords bring the work to a close.

## Prelude and Fugue in E Minor

The Prelude (*Allegro con fuoco*) is based on a simple melody very characteristic of the composer’s style, and is accompanied throughout by rushing *arpeggi*.



This melody begins at the close of the first bar, and then appears in a somewhat developed form, with a cadence in B minor. A chromatically descending *arpeggio* passage brings us back to the melody again, but this time in the dominant key, and only as far as 1 *a*, which is repeated again sequentially in A minor. After another sequential passage the music works up to a climax, and, suddenly dying away to a *piano* again, grows gradually in volume until the original melody is reannounced in its entirety. It is followed by the same developments as those which were associated with it when appearing in the key of B minor (page 3). Then a short phrase, very reminiscent of the melody which accompanies the words ‘Though the day is at hand,

the night will come also' in the *Hymn of Praise*, is heard and repeated with a typical upward chromatic passage added.



After a repetition of this period the Prelude is brought to a close by a series of ascending *arpeggi* in the tonic key.

### *The Fugue. (4 Parts)*

The subject is given out first in the bass :



followed by a real answer in the tenor. The counter subject beneath it is evidently, in part at least, suggested by the subject.



This now appears in the alto with another corresponding answer in the treble, the last bar of which is repeated in sequence a tone lower, bringing it into A minor, and so closing the exposition.

The modulatory section opens with a slightly altered version of 3 in the tenor in A minor, then in the bass in D minor, in the treble in E minor, and for the last time in the section in the tenor again in E minor, followed by a *codetta* which carries the music into the

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key of the relative major. At the twenty-fourth bar there follows a short episode based on the counter-subject (4 *b*), until another middle entry is reached at bar 27 (in the bass). This is succeeded by another short episode from the end of bar 29 to the middle of bar 32, the material being drawn mainly from 3 *b*. Meanwhile the music is growing in pace and volume as if to herald the return of the subject with its strong bass counterpoint moving in contrary motion, and so, in the middle of bar 32, the subject verily returns, appearing in the highest part. Then a phrase is carried from its first four notes and treated sequentially for a bar and a half, when it is augmented by three notes more from the subject and followed by a short climactic period, the whole forming an episode introductory to a new version of the subject at bar 41.



Thus inverted it commences in the tenor part in B minor, reappears in the alto in the relative major, and then is given out consecutively by treble and bass (bars 46 and 48), the accompaniment to the latter being very suggestive of the original counter subject also inverted (bars 48-50). At bar 51 the *stretto* section commences, heralded by a dominant pedal. Here the successive entries of the inverted subject at a close distance of time impart a sense of excitement and stimulus which is often enhanced by the *stretto* being written over a sustained note in the bass, as it is in this passage. After two bars the dominant pedal

makes way for the counter-subject which is heard in both tenor and bass for another two bars, the *stretto* increasing in animation the while. Then follows a passage in the upper parts (bars 56 and 57) at once reminiscent of Mendelssohn's Fugue for Organ in G major, accompanied by ascending scales in the bass. The music now begins to grow more intense, the directions being *crescendo* and *accelerando poco a poco all' allegro con fuoco*, and quavers give place to semiquavers in the accompaniment (bar 58). In the midst of the section, however, the subject inverted reappears in its entirety (bars 62-4), and for a short space arrests the impetus of the music. After this the *stretto* resumes its hurrying course to the accompaniment of rushing semiquavers as before, until a striking modulation reintroduces the subject in its original form (bar 73). This leads on to the final section (bar 77) with the subject reappearing in the bass in its original key. Another short episode now follows (bars 80-2) in the chromatic vein, of which the composer is so fond. Then the dominant pedal is heard again and continues for six bars, while a quasi *stretto* period is in evidence above it. It is worthy of note that the first two entries are those of the subject in its inverted form, but the third gives it to us in its normal form. Two and a half bars of episodic material lead up to final announcement of the subject, as far as the fugue proper is concerned, and to this is added a coda (or tail) made up of the closing phrase of the subject, and played in octaves by the left hand. This ultimately leads into a chorale (*ff*), a use with which all students of Mendelssohn are familiar; it is accompanied in the bass by soft *staccato*, scalewise, counterpoint, and gradually gets



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slower and softer towards its close, when 3 is given out in the major key by the 'tenor' part with a suggestion of the original counter subject in the bass. It is heard yet again, immediately afterwards, in the highest part, but this time only to herald the beginning of the end ; for, after 3 bars of simple modulation, the music comes to rest softly and harmoniously on the chord of the tonic major.

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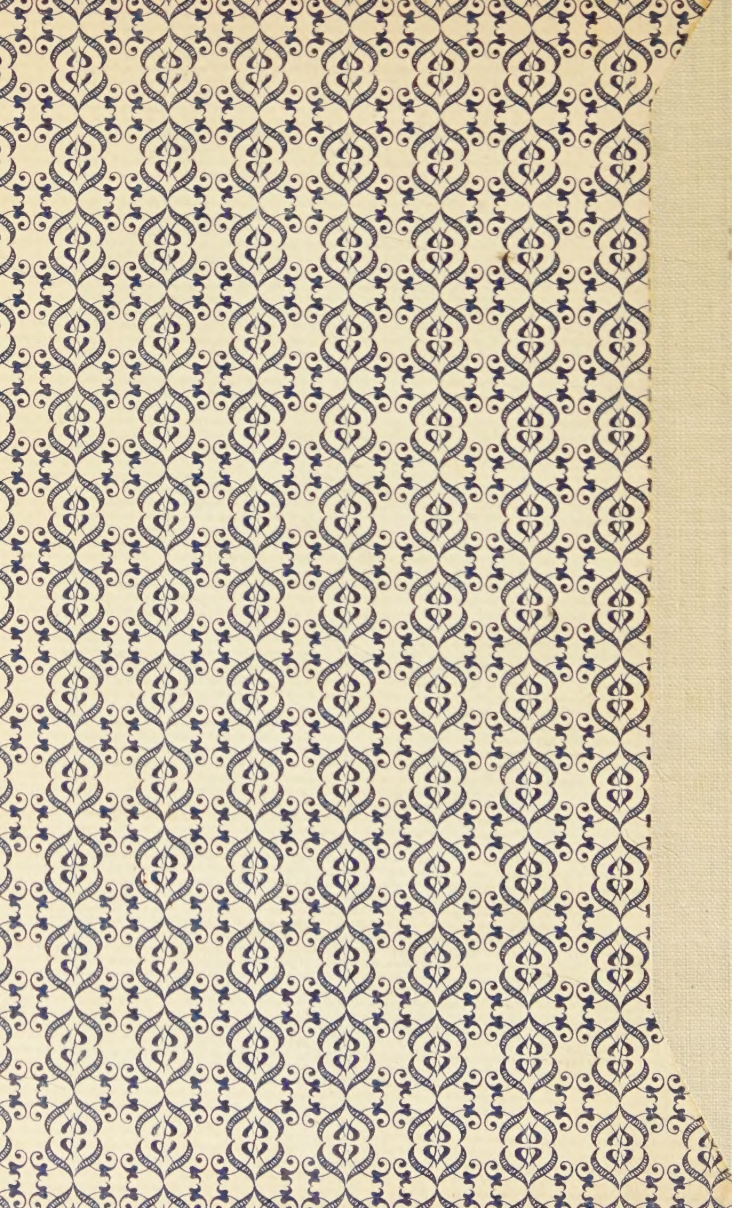












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